

REQUEST FOR A RULING THAT FRENCH THESES  
SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF *DOCTEUR DU*  
*TROISIEME CYCLE* ARE NOT PUBLISHED Z.N. (S) 2497

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Confusion can and does arise in zoological nomenclature as a result of misunderstandings about dates of publication. The Code also lays down rules as to what constitutes publication. Theses in French universities for the *Doctorat d'Etat* clearly satisfy these rules and are generally recognized as publications. As many as 200 copies may be produced, they are widely distributed and are assigned an ISB number.

2. However, the position of theses for *Docteur du Troisième Cycle* is less clear. For most purposes these are not treated as publications and they are not assigned an ISB number. Up till now they have been quoted as unpublished works by other researchers. Nevertheless, there are numerous individual theses that were produced and distributed in a way that might be thought to satisfy Article 8 of the Code. Each thesis is produced by a process that can assure numerous identical copies, and the copies so produced are simultaneously obtainable. In some cases 64 copies are produced and most of these are distributed to libraries. Are such theses to be considered published or not?

3. It seems clear that the theses in question cannot be excluded under the provisions of either Article 9(8) 'distribution only to colleagues or students of a note' without unduly stretching the meaning of 'note'; or under Article 9(11) 'deposit of a document (e.g. a thesis) in a collection of documents, a library or other archive'. Nor do we suggest that a precise value be placed on the word 'numerous' in the expression 'numerous identical copies'. On the other hand, the present is a good time to take action, for third cycle doctorates were phased out from the beginning of the 1984-85 academic year. We understand that new French theses started in 1984 will be distributed in the same way as theses for the *Doctorat d'Etat* and will thus be considered as valid publications.

4. We believe that the method of distribution of the third cycle theses is not in accordance with the spirit of Article 8 of the Code, and that this justifies the Commission in ruling that they are unpublished. The method of distribution is specified in an official decision (*arrêté*) dated 24 February 1976 in the *Journal officiel* of the French republic. This states that the copies must be distributed as follows:

Three copies for deposit in the library of the university where the work was done;

One copy to the relevant documentation centre of the *Centre National de Recherche Scientifique*;

60 copies to the library of the university where the work was done for use in inter-university exchanges.

The first two items clearly fall under Article 9(11). As for the third item, since inter-university exchanges are normally the subject of standard and long-lasting arrangements, the destination of each copy must be determined in advance, and no copies of these theses are 'obtainable free of charge or by purchase' (Article 8(2)). This defect, in our opinion, justifies the ruling we seek.

5. The alternative course, to consider each thesis individually on its merits, seems certain to lead to confusion.

6. Theses produced in many countries for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy contain important taxonomic contributions which are unavailable because the theses in which they appear remain unpublished. We hope that these countries will follow the example of France and the *Doctorat d'Etat* and ensure that theses accepted for such degrees are published in such a way as to satisfy the Code.

7. We therefore ask the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature to rule that theses for the degree of *Docteur du Troisième Cycle* in French universities are not published because, when they are first produced, no copies are obtainable free of charge or by purchase, as required by Article 8(2) of the Code.